

CONCERNED CLERGY FOR BUSINESS DATA COMPETITION

October 20, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554-0004

RE: *Special Access Rates for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers, WC Docket No. 05-25; Business Data Services in an Internet Protocol Environment, WC Docket No. 16-143.*

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

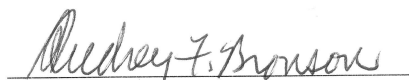
Affordable, reliable access to the internet is vital for all Americans, and especially for under-served and low-income communities. It has become an irreplaceable lifeline to jobs, education, health care, government services, and more.

As ministers serving African-American communities, we share the views of the sixteen members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) who recently urged you to put these consumer needs front and center when you vote on new "business data" rules later this month. We need to encourage competition and new investment in this vital "back office" sector of the internet that powers consumer services like cell phone access, ATMs, hospitals and libraries, small businesses and more. That is the best way to ensure high quality high-speed services reach everyone who needs them while promoting economic development in under-served communities and creating jobs.

To accomplish this, the FCC must pass rules that encourage new competitors to enter costly or underserved markets, and base new regulations and requirements on the real costs and challenges of providing service in different areas (recognizing the unique costs of serving rural markets, for example). And as the CBC members urged, above all it should "encourage ... providers to compete with each other through real investment in their networks, bringing new services to places they had not previously reached and increasing high-speed data capacity to the businesses that need it for continued expansion."

We appreciate the steps you have taken to adjust the proposed rules to better accomplish these goals, and we thank you for your work to ensure this critical sector of the internet works to service all Americans.

Sincerely,

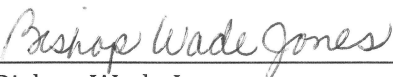

Bishop Audrey F. Bronson
Sanctuary Church of the Open Door



Rev. Wayne Thompson
First Baptist Institutional Church



Rev. Ellis I. Washington
St. Paul AME Church


Rev. William Moore
Tenth Memorial Baptist Church

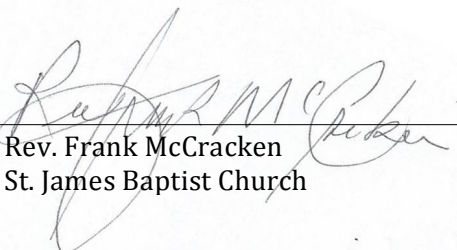

Rev. Dr. Guy Campbell, Jr.
Evergreen Baptist Church


Bishop Wade Jones
First Emmanuel Tabernacle Church


Rev. Raymond Lassiter
Antioch Baptist Church, Hampton


Rev. Ralph Blanks
Vine Memorial Baptist Church


Dr. Michael Johnson
Sixth Avenue Baptist Church


Rev. Frank McCracken
St. James Baptist Church